

Palm Sunday

Mark 10:46-52 Luke 19:1-9 John 11:38-44 , 12:12-19

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Pastor Dave Bolte



In the biblical narrative, the Palm Sunday weekend was a very busy time for Jesus. There was a flurry of activity and some key miracles right before Jesus triumphantly enters into Jerusalem. St. John tells us that the people didn't know what to make of Jesus; in fact, he tells us of four responses to Jesus on Palm Sunday¹:

1. The **disciples** did not understand what was happening.
2. **Some** people were amazed and intrigued by Jesus
3. **Others** followed Him because they wanted to see if He would do any more miracles
4. And the **Pharisees** were exasperated, and they put a reward out for anyone willing to help arrest him. They were bent on killing Him.

It's the same today, isn't it? **Jesus divides people**. Some people hear the Word, believe His promises, and trust in Him. Others don't know what to make of Him, and end up ignoring Him completely. And still others, in the hardness of their heart, reject him and are hostile to His Word and His People². Jesus Himself taught us that He divides people; some believe and some don't, it's the nature of the gospel.

¹ Note John 12:16-19, and in 4 consecutive verses, John describes the 4 different groups of people!

² Jesus calls this a "**crisis**" (judgment) in John 3:19-21. One commentator writes, "People don't want God interfering with what they consider "a good time," and they don't believe the warnings of Scripture that they are under God's judgment now and will face it eternally when they die. People think that they're basically good and that God will overlook their faults and give them credit for their good deeds on Judgment day. So they don't repent of their sin and believe in Jesus Christ to save them from God's judgment." "Lesson 18: Why People Reject Christ (John 3:19-21)," Steven J. Cole, July 7, 2013, Bible.org

Today, let's focus on three men who did believe; three men whose lives were dramatically changed by Jesus and they followed Jesus into Jerusalem and became eye witnesses to the crucifixion!

Let's start with **Bartimaeus**. Just a few days before Palm Sunday, Jesus was in Jericho, and blind Bartimaeus cried out to Him for healing. "**Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!** he prayed." *You know Jesus wasn't going to walk away from that!* Jesus goes over to the blind man and heals him. Bartimaeus opens his eyes and the first thing he sees is Jesus, the Son of God!

The Lord has "opened your eyes" as well, not physically, but spiritually. He "opened your eyes" so that you could know, understand, and believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of the world! Faith is a gift from God; it is a miracle from God's good hand!

The text says that Bartimaeus *followed* Jesus --- as Jesus was making His way to the cross! What a gift the Lord gave to this man, He opened his blind eyes so he could witness the greatest event in earth history: the crucifixion and resurrection of the Son of God!

That same week, Jesus called **Zacchaeus** down from a tree. Zacchaeus was a hated tax collector; a poor, miserable man who admitted that he stole from the people. But Jesus loved him just like **He loves us poor miserable sinners**. Jesus changed his heart, like he changes our hearts, and faith is created. It is the Word of God's Law that exposes your sin; it is the Word of God's Gospel that forgives you and creates a new man within you. It is the kindness of God that leads you to repentance. It is the love of God that forgives your sins!

God is kind and loving to Zacchaeus, and Jesus leads him to repent of his sin, and creates faith within him. Zacchaeus responds by inviting Jesus into his home! Zacchaeus reminds all of us that Jesus is entering into Jerusalem **to seek and to save the lost**. No doubt, Zacchaeus was a part of the Palm Sunday parade; and he too was a witness to the greatest event in earth history: the crucifixion and resurrection of the Son of God!

It was this same week, right before Palm Sunday, that Jesus raised **Lazarus** from the dead! Right outside the gates of Jerusalem, Jesus works perhaps His greatest miracle of all to this point: He raises Lazarus from the dead! John make sure that we understand that **this was a big deal!** There were many Jews from Jerusalem comforting Mary and Martha at the loss of their brother. News of this *resurrection miracle* spread throughout Jerusalem; it would have been the talk of the town! It angered the Pharisees so much that not only were they determined to put Jesus to death, but now they wanted to put Lazarus *back to death* as well!

Just as Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He promises to raise you from the dead! Jesus is the Lord of Life; His death and resurrection gives life to all people! You have already crossed over from death to life in your Baptism; you have eternal life right now and the sure and confident hope of the resurrection of your body on the Last Day! Lazarus is a picture of what God has done for you both spiritually now, and physically on the Last Day! A week after Lazarus is raised from the dead; Jesus Himself will rise from the dead and give life to all people! *He is the resurrection and the life, He who believes in Him though he dies yet shall he live. And whoever lives and believes in Him shall never die!*

Bartimaeus. Zacchaeus. Lazarus.

Jesus is bringing a parade of people into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday³! The 12 disciples join blind **Bartimaeus** who can now see; **Zacchaeus**, the repentant tax collector and thief; and **Lazarus** who was dead for four days but now lives!

There is a depth of meaning to Palm Sunday! The layers of significance are many! Jesus stages Palm Sunday to be a Messianic event! He wants everyone to understand what is happening. He arranges for a colt to be found and then brought to Him. Instead of walking into Jerusalem like He did many times before, this time Jesus intentionally sits on the colt and rides into the holy,

³ There is one other fascinating group of people that is mentioned that we don't have time to cover in this sermon: the Greeks in John 12:20-23. When you read the story, it is like "this is the sign" that Jesus was waiting for; He immediately knew His "hour" was at hand. The "Greeks" are Gentiles; and just as there were Gentiles (≈ Magi) at His birth, there will be Gentiles (= "Greeks") at His death. It reminds us that Jesus died for all men of all nations – Jew and Gentiles alike! They also would be part of this "Palm Sunday parade" and witness the crucifixion and resurrection of the Son of God!

royal city of Jerusalem. The people are reminded of the Messianic prophecies. With palm branches in hand, they cry out saying the words of the Messianic Psalm 118 (118:25-26)

“Hosanna!”

“Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Blessed is the King of Israel!”

Laying their robes on the road to honor Him, they sing the Messianic prophecy from the Old Testament book of Zechariah (9:9)

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!
Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!
See, your king comes to you,
righteous and victorious,
lowly and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

And with that, Holy Week begins.

By faith, we join with **Bartimaeus**, **Zacchaeus**, **Lazarus**, and the others in praying “**Hosanna!**” as we wave our palms branches. But we know what is coming this week. This week will spiral into demonic darkness:

- Jesus will be **betrayed** with a kiss, by one of the 12 disciples!
- He will be **arrested** by an armed crowd,
- He will be **denied** by Peter -- His close friend.
- He will be **ridiculed** with a purple robe;
- He will be **crowned** with painful thorns;
- He will be **beaten, whipped, spit on, insulted and abused;**
- He will be **tried in a mock trial** by the high priest, and
- He will be **dragged before an unjust Roman Governor**
- He will **die by crucifixion**
- He will be **buried** in a stranger’s tomb
- **AND HE WILL RISE FROM THE DEAD ON THE THIRD DAY!**

Everything Jesus taught and every miracle that He performed pointed forward to this. This is why He came into the world. This is how He saves us from our sins. With **Bartimaeus**, **Zacchaeus**, **Lazarus**, and the others, **we will watch and believe!** Amen!

730 prayer FIRST PARAGRAPH / THEME OF THE DAY PRAYER

Made this prayer also the theme of the day prayer and put it in newsletter in September, 2018.

Lord Jesus, today we celebrate Palm Sunday knowing that you entered Jerusalem to be our Savior.

We thank you for your love that took you to a cross where you suffered and died for us and our salvation.

We ask that You lead us to repentance, and keep us in the true faith, as we live as Your holy people.

We thank You for opening our eyes of faith like you did for Bartimaeus.

We thank you for your kindness that has led us to repentance like Zacchaeus.

And we thank You that You have given us life --- spiritual, eternal, and resurrected life -- like Lazarus.

By the power of the Holy Spirit,

and to the glory of God the Father,

we thank praise and honor You, our Lord and Savior,

Amen!

Mark 10:46-52

Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, **a blind man, Bartimaeus** (which means “son of Timaeus”), was sitting by the roadside begging. 47 When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

48 Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” 49 Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.” 50 Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. 51 “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him. The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.” 52 “Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” **Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.**

Luke 19:1-9

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 A man was there by the name of **Zacchaeus**; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. 3 He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. 5 When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” 6 So he came

down at once and welcomed him gladly. 7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.” 8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.” 9 Jesus said to him, **“Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”**

John 11:38-44

Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. 39 “Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.” 40 Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?” 41 So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.” 43 When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, **“Lazarus, come out!”** 44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

John 12:12-19

The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. 13 They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting,

“Hosanna!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Blessed is the king of Israel!”

14 Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written:

**15 “Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion;
see, your king is coming,
seated on a donkey’s colt.”**

1. 16 At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him.
2. 17 Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word.
3. 18 Many people, because they had heard that he had performed this sign, went out to meet him.
4. 19 So the Pharisees said to one another, “See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!”